

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 310607

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, CVIS, CGEN, GE, US

SUBJECT: GDR NOTE ON ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALISTS

1. GDR EMBASSY HAS DELIVERED FOLLOWING NOTE TO THE
DEPARTMENT ON ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALISTS: BEGIN TEXT:
THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND HAS THE HONOUR
TO INFORM ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC IS
PREPARED TO GRANT MULTIPLE ENTRY AND EXIT VISAS FOR
A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR TO CORRESPONDENTS FROM THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA ACCREDITED TO THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC, ON THE BASIS OF RECIPROCITY.

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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC IS OF

THE OPINION THAT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD CONTRIBUTE
TO FACILITATING THE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR JOURNALISTS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FINAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE ON
SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE.

THE POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THIS NOTE WOULD BE CONSIDERED

AS EXPRESSING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS TO
PUT THIS ARRANGEMENT INTO PRACTICE.

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC AVAILS ITSELF OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA THE ASSURANCES OF ITS HIGH CONSIDERATION.

BERLIN, "30" NOV. 1976. END TEXT.

2. DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO GDR NOTE WAS TRANSMITTED
ON DECEMBER 23 AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN TEXT:
WITH REFERENCE TO THE NOTE FROM THE MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
NOVEMBER 30, 1976, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS THE
HONOR TO INFORM THE EMBASSY OF THE FOLLOWING:

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SUPPORTS
STRONGLY THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS FOR
JOURNALISTS, WHICH IS AN IMPORTANT PROVISION OF THE
FINAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE OF SECURITY AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE. SINCE SIGNATURE OF THE FINAL ACT IN AUGUST,
1975, THE UNITED STATES HAS WORKED CONSISTENTLY TO ACHIEVE
RECIPROCITY WITH OTHER SIGNATORIES ON THIS IMPORTANT
QUESTION.

AS THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS AWARE, THE
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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS
OFFERED TO ISSUE MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS TO JOURNALISTS
OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC ON THE CONDITION
THAT THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AGREE TO GRANT
FULL RECIPROCITY TO AMERICAN JOURNALISTS. HOWEVER, THE
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC HAS SO FAR BEEN UNWILLING
TO EXTEND SUCH FULL RECIPROCITY TO ALL AMERICAN
JOURNALISTS WISHING TO WORK ON ITS TERRITORY. INSTEAD
IT HAS ESTABLISHED A CATEGORY OF JOURNALISTS TO WHOM
RECIPROCITY WILL NOT BE GRANTED, BASED SOLELY ON THE
PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF THESE JOURNALISTS.

SUCH ARBITRARY DISCRIMINATION IS NOT IN ACCORD WITH
THE FINAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE AND DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO
FACILITATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS.
THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC TO
ACCREDIT CERTAIN UNITED STATES CORRESPONDENTS BECAUSE

OF THEIR PLACE OF RESIDENCE IS A MAJOR HINDRANCE TO THE ABILITY OF AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS TO COVER EVENTS IN THE GDR.

FOR THIS REASON, THE UNITED STATES IS NOT ABLE TO GIVE A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC FOR THE RECIPROCAL ISSUANCE OF MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS TO CORRESPONDENTS. HOWEVER, IF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS CAN GIVE ASSURANCES THAT THERE WILL BE NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS SOLELY BECAUSE OF THEIR PLACE OF RESIDENCE, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WOULD BE WILLING TO RECONSIDER ITS POSITION ON THIS MATTER. END TEXT.

3. IN CONVERSATION AT SOCIAL OCCASION ON DECEMBER 17, GDR EMBASSY PRESS ATTACHE PROTSCH SAID TEXT OF NOTE HAD COME FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY IN BERLIN WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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NO EXPLANATION AS TO WHY MATTER WAS BEING RAISED AGAIN AT THIS TIME. PROTSCH PROFESSED TO KNOW OF NO REASON WHY GDR WOULD WANT TO MENTION THE SUBJECT NOW. HE AGREED THAT POSITIONS OF BOTH SIDES HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR. WHEN A DEPARTMENT OFFICER SUGGESTED THAT BEST COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE TO WAIT YEAR OR TWO GDR NEEDED TO ACCEPT IDEA OF US CORRESPONDENTS WORKING OUT OF BONN AND BERLIN, PROTSCH REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT THINK PROCESS WOULD TAKE THAT LONG.

4. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION ON MORNING OF DECEMBER 22, GDR EMBASSY COUNSELOR MONTAG SUGGESTED THAT ONE REASON FOR GDR HESITATION TO ACCREDIT US CORRESPONDENTS FROM BONN AND WEST BERLIN WAS THAT THE EAST GERMANS HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING OTHER COUNTRIES NOT TO DEMAND ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALISTS STATIONED IN THOSE CITIES. MONTAG ARGUED THAT IF GDR NOW CHANGED POLICY FOR THE UNITED STATES, OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD CLAIM THAT THEY WERE BEING TREATED LESS WELL THAN WERE THE AMERICANS. WITHOUT SAYING SO DIRECTLY, MONTAG GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GDR UNDERSTOOD THE NEED TO SOFTEN THEIR POSITION ON ACCREDITATION OF

CORRESPONDENTS LIVING IN BONN AND BERLIN.
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